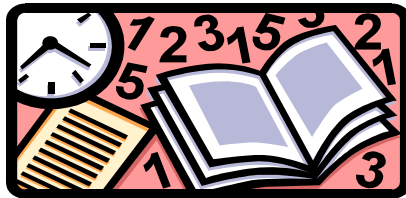




Classroom Management

Many factors come together in making your classroom an educational, nurturing atmosphere where students can enjoy learning. It's a combination of many aspects that creates a productive learning environment. From room setup and seating arrangements to classroom transitions and procedures, it is the overall organization that leads to a beneficial experience for both the students and the teacher. I have many ideas about how to organize my classroom to create an enjoyable atmosphere where students have the freedom to safely learn and discover their world.

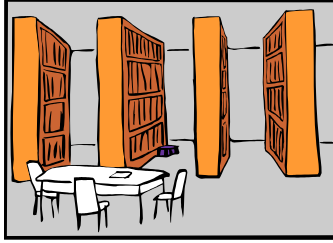


Room preparation is the first step in working towards an educationally organized classroom. Bulletin boards and wall space are important parts of the room. Borrowing an idea from Harry Wong, I will have one of my bulletin boards filled with pictures, awards, and statements about who I am and what I love, centered by my college diploma. The rest of the boards and wall space will be reserved for unit ideas, student projects, and other things that create a place that demonstrates what we've learned and who we are as a

class. Displaying students' work is a very important idea, so I will put up weekly 100's from spelling, math, science, and social studies tests in a designated area of my classroom, so the students will have something to be proud of. I will also display any work that a student has done very well, because a student doesn't have to get a 100 on something to be proud of it. This can be a very motivational idea for the student who doesn't get a lot of 100's or doesn't do many homework assignments completely or well.



Floor space is another key to classroom management. I will have my students desks arranged in a horseshoe, which allows the entire class of students to share ideas as a group or team. With everyone facing each other, it creates a type of community learning, where students can share ideas and questions in a forum type atmosphere. No child has his or her back to another, and it leaves plenty of floor space to include a circular table or two in the middle. These tables can be used for group work and activities. I might also have the students in columns, so that there are two walkways down the middle of the room, and three columns of desks from front to back. The teacher's desk will be at the front of the room, where the horseshoe opens up or the columns face, to complete the students' desk pattern and forming a learning circle. I believe the desk and filing equipment should not stand as an intimidating perch from where I watch over the students, but rather should be a part of the desk pattern. Hopefully this will create a sense that we are all together in the learning process.

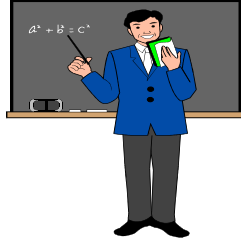


I would like to have a few tall bookcases that create a small cubby in one of the corners of the room. It will make a small learning and reading center, but will also have easy access. This could also be the library center, so that students could have a semi-private place to quietly read. Depending on how many computers I would have access to, I would like to place them along the back wall, as a sort of technology center. Having plenty of bookshelves will be a key in terms of classroom management. I hope to store most of my textbooks on shelves accessible to the students, placed against the walls of the classroom. Teacher's supplies will be stored in cabinets or closets, since they don't need to be conveniently accessible for the most part. Other teacher materials will be stored in the same way, organized as much as possible. There will be a small area, inside a cabinet or closet space, set aside with materials for projects, such as construction paper, crayons and markers. Students will be expected to keep most of their materials and possessions inside their lockers or cubbies, and the remainder of materials that they need for that day will be kept inside their desks. Administrative materials, such as records and student files, will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer. Whatever kind of storage area they are kept in, it will be locked, so that there will be no violations of privacy or theft of the files and records. I will keep a folder on each student, and when a situation occurs that requires discipline and/or serious consequences, I will have information on the violation, the day that it occurred, and other pertinent information related to the incident. This will be kept for parents and for the school administration, and in case of repeated or

serious offenses, there will be a record of the child's behavioral history. I can also use these folders to keep examples of the kind of work the student does, whether it's a writing sample that demonstrates the child's poor ability to include details or a math exam that the child got completely correct.



I also think it is important to have some kind of plant or animal life in the room, especially with elementary students. A few decorative plants would create a sense of good Chi, and an animal teaches students about a part of life that they can't just get from a book. The responsibility of having a pet, such a guinea pig or even a dog, helps kids learn about more than just social studies and language arts. There are all kinds of animals in the classroom these days, from fish and hamsters to ferrets and hermit crabs, and I think they teach the students responsibility and create a sense of family and community. It shows the kids that they're not the only living beings in this world, and that we should learn to live with them on a regular basis. It also gives children who don't have pets at home the chance to feel the love that a kind animal can bring to the heart.



Classroom procedures are possibly the most important key to classroom management. When students have a routine to follow, they are able to stay more focused, attentive, and organized. Daily procedures give students a schedule to follow, and after thorough repetition, it gives students structure, which allows them to be more effective learners.

The room use procedures, like all of the other procedures, will be discussed and repeated so that the students understand them and adjust to them as routine. The teacher's desk drawers will be off limits to all students, unless they are specifically given permission to use something from it. This same procedure is meant for teacher-material storage areas and filing. Unless the student has specific permission to take something from them, they are off limits. This allows for confidentiality and security. Students may keep the books and materials that they need for the day inside their desks, and these will be cleaned out during a designated time every Friday afternoon.

Bathroom and drinking fountain procedures are very important to the maintenance of order in the classroom. There will be a specific time allowed during the morning, after lunch, and in the afternoon for bathroom and fountain use. The class will line up together, and every student that has to use the bathroom will raise his or her hand. They will be dismissed to the bathroom in small groups while the rest of the students wait quietly in the hallway. Students will also be allowed to use the drinking fountain at this time. In case of bathroom emergencies, students will come to me and tuck their thumb

underneath their pointer finger so that I can just see the tip of their thumb sticking out. That will be the signal for an emergency bathroom run.

The pencil sharpener will be another specific procedure. Students will be allowed to sharpen their pencils before a certain hour in the morning, such a 9 or 10 A.M. After that, students will not be allowed to sharpen pencils because class lessons will have begun, so they will have to wait until their lunch break.

Centers such as the computer area and the library area will be available to students after they have completed their work. Along with the designated times to use these centers, students will be free to use them quietly when they have all of their class work and assignments completed.

Great teachers have special ways of capturing their kids' attention. I plan to experiment with various techniques for grasping student attention. One routine that I have found always works is clapping. When the students hear me clapping, they are to stop talking and drop everything that they are doing. They must listen to my clap and repeat it back to me in the same rhythm as a class. Students respond well to it, and they enjoy the challenge of imitating so much that they give you their sudden, full attention. As for getting my students to participate during a lesson or reading, I will call on students after asking for volunteers. Anyone who is not paying attention will be called upon immediately. If, for example, they are called upon to read aloud and the student doesn't know when we are in the book, they will have to stand up for 5 minutes. It is a great penalty because it is not severe, yet it makes enough of an example that the rest of the children snap to attention and remain attentive.

Students can obtain help from me by raising their hands. I may incorporate the holding up of one finger or some other kind of procedure for asking for help. I will then ask that student what their question is, or go to their desk to ask, depending on how the situation warrants.

Once seatwork is completed, students will have a few options. Kids can go to any of the centers in the room, such as the computer area or classroom library. There will also be a list of activities that students can do for each unit. These activities will be hands-on, will further the kids' knowledge, and still be fun all the while. I have found that I always need a ton of extra work to do, because students will get their seatwork done as fast as they can, and a busy classroom is a productive one.

To begin the day, students should turn in any homework at the door. There will be a drop box, and as students enter, they should place all due homework in it. Students should then collect the materials and books they will need for the day, and place it on or inside of their desks. Their backpacks and coats should then be put away in their lockers or cubbies. They should return to their seats and begin the morning work written out on the board. They will work on that until it is time for the pledge of allegiance, followed by the morning announcements. Then I will lead them through the events of the day, so that they are aware of their schedule and of the day's activities. This is one important aspect of the day, because kids need to be aware of what is going on during their day, and going over it as a class will allow for questions about the schedule. That way, every child knows what he or she is doing for the remainder of the day.

When leaving the room, students will form two lines inside the classroom. We will march silently through the halls in the same way, stopping at particular points

throughout the school. To close out the day, I will save the last five minutes to talk about something thought provoking, and leave them pondering a particular issue, because the last five minutes of class are always remembered. We will walk out to the buses in two single-file lines.

During reading, students are expected to behave in the same manner that they would during a regular lesson. They will listen as students take turns reading aloud, and follow along, suffering the consequence of standing for 5 minutes if they don't.

In terms of collecting materials, I plan on having student helpers, who change on a weekly basis. They will have various jobs, such as handing back papers, collecting and passing out worksheets, attendance and lunches, and many others. Allowing the students to have jobs throughout the room gives them a feeling of importance and pride, and makes them feel like they are a part of the room. I also plan to have some kind of token economy system. Students will begin the quarter with a certain amount of play money, and at the end of each marking period we will have a class store, run by the children. Students will lose money throughout the quarter when they misbehave. Kids will be able to buy things from the class store based upon the amount of money they have left in their accounts. This will help kids behave, and will also serve as a nice reward at the end of each quarter.

Playground time will be at the end of the day, and it will be a privilege that is earned. Students who get in trouble during the course of the day will lose time on the playground. One student will be responsible for the classroom balls, which will be his or her helper job. Any misbehavior on the playground will be served during the playground time of the next day.

In terms of a grading system, homework will work on check system. If the student's work is done, they will receive a check for the day, and if not, then they will complete it during recess. The homework will then be graded. Tests will be important, but differentiated instruction will also be a major part of my grading system. From personal experience, I know that there are many more ways to grade a student rather just on what they can do on a test. I will try to instruct and assess based on each of the student's strengths. I will look at the student's artistic or musical ability, their ability to present rather than write, and other different ways of assessment. I will use as many authentic assessment techniques as time will allow over the course of the year.

Feedback is important to having a strong relationship with the students. I will have constant feedback with my students, ranging anywhere from planned meetings to just daily conversation. Getting to know your kids is an important key to assessing a child. Sensing when something is wrong with a child is a powerful tool, one that I hope to develop as I get into teaching.

Assignments will be posted on the board, and students will be expected to keep up with their work by writing it in their assignment pads or notebooks. I also would like to have a stamp that says "homework" so that students will be aware of what handouts are due the next day. We will also go through assignments as a class to avoid confusion and answer questions.

There will be a mailbox in the back of the room, and the students should check it every day for assignments that will be due, papers that need to go home to parents, and old papers that have been corrected and can go home.

In terms of neatness, it will be hard to have more than a few assignments done on the computer because of time constraints, so most work will be done by hand. Larger projects, such as research projects, will need to be completed on a computer. Depending on the level of importance, projects will be done on notebook paper in regular handwriting or in word-processed form. Late work will be accepted, but each day will decrease its optimum grade. If a student turns in a paper three days late, then he or she will only be able to get a maximum of an 85 out of 100 on it. Each day will mean a loss of 5 points. There will be an example of the expected heading on all turned-in assignments for students to follow.

Communication with parents is also a vital part of the education process. Parents will be alerted when behavior is unacceptable, but they will also be aware of when their student is doing well in school. Progress reports, done every 5 weeks, will keep parents up to date with their child's behavior, grades, and completion of homework.

Displaying work is an important element in classroom management. It gives students something to be proud of, and makes them feel like their work is valued. I will have the work of my students on every wall, every ceiling board, and every available inch of space. It feels good to know that your work is valued, and I want my kids to feel that way about their products.

The organization of the classroom is the key to a productive, orderly learning experience for both the students and the teacher. A routine of procedures will allow the students to form comfortable habits and techniques, which will aide in the learning experience. Hopefully, an organized classroom will make for a productive teaching experience.